

## **Section 1: Introduction and Planning Process**

The Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan, hereafter referred to as the Plan, addresses privately held unincorporated urban and rural areas of the county and their interface points with Federal or State Lands such as the Caribou Targhee National Forest or the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. While this Plan does not establish requirements for the city, county, state, or federally held lands, it does provide a framework for the identification of mitigating actions for the common impacts associated with wildfires. The resources and background information in the Plan are applicable countywide, as the goals and recommendations lay groundwork for local mitigation plans and partnerships.

All mitigation is local, and the primary responsibility for development and implementation of risk reduction strategies and policies lies with local jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions, however, are not alone. Partners and resources exist at the state and federal levels. No plan is complete until it is implemented. This Plan describes prescriptive programmatic actions that will bring about mitigation. These mitigation actions, if implemented over the next several years, will help reduce the damages caused by wildfire in the wildland/urban interface. However, it is up to the community to ensure that these actions are taken.

The Plan, and Appendices that follow, are the culmination of work conducted by the Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Interagency Planning Group and include a variety of measures designed to reduce the impact of wildfires. The Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan provides documentation of implementing actions designed to reduce the risk from wildfires through education and outreach programs, the development of partnerships, and implementation of preventative activities such as development of defensive space and mechanical fuel treatments. The resources and information within the Plan:

1. Establish a foundation for coordination and collaboration among agencies and the public in Bonneville County,
2. Identify and prioritize mitigation projects and implementing actions;
3. Assist in meeting the requirements of federal assistance programs.

### **Program Mission**

The mission of the Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Fire Mitigation Program is to promote public policy designed to protect citizens, critical facilities, infrastructure, private property, and the environment from wildfires.

### **Program Goals**

The Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Fire Mitigation Program has established goals that describe the overall direction that county agencies, organizations, and citizens will take toward analyzing and mitigating wildland/urban interface risks from wildfires.

### **Protect Life and Property**

- ❑ Implement activities that assist in protecting lives by making homes, businesses, infrastructure, critical facilities, and other property more resistant to wildfire hazards.
- ❑ Improve hazard assessment information; reduce losses and repetitive damages from hazard events.

- ❑ Improve countywide zoning, building codes, standards for new development, and encouragement of preventative measures for existing development in areas vulnerable to wildfire hazards.

### **Public Awareness**

- ❑ Develop and implement educational outreach programs
- ❑ Provide information on tools, partnership opportunities, and funding resources to assist in implementation of mitigation actions.
- ❑ Develop a system to quickly and effectively communicate impending emergencies to residents of summer home areas.

### **Natural Systems**

- ❑ Balance watershed planning, natural resource management, and land use planning with wildfire mitigation to protect life, property, and the environment.
- ❑ Preserve, rehabilitate, and enhance natural systems to serve wildfire mitigation functions.

### **Partnerships and Implementation**

- ❑ Strengthen communication, and coordinate participation, among and within public agencies, citizens, non-profit organizations, business, and industry to gain a vested interest in implementation.
- ❑ Encourage leadership within public and private sector organizations to prioritize and implement local, county, and regional hazard mitigation actions.

### **Emergency Services**

- ❑ Establish policy to ensure mitigation projects for critical facilities, services, and infrastructure.
- ❑ Strengthen emergency operations by increasing collaboration and coordination.
- ❑ Coordinate and integrate wildfire mitigation activities, where appropriate, with emergency operations plans and procedures.
- ❑ Reduce response time to minimum access areas through improvement/addition of roads and bridges.

### **Background**

Bonneville County received a grant through the Idaho Falls Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to prepare a Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan. This plan documents programmatic goals, identifies implementing actions, and sets priorities for reducing wildfire risk.

Wildfire hazard mitigation is the development and implementation of activities designed to reduce or eliminate losses resulting from wildfires. Wildfire mitigation can be used in conjunction with other county plans, including the County Comprehensive Land Use and Emergency Operations Plans. Each county within the state has received a request to write a simple Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan. These plans are to contain at least the following five elements:

- 1) Documentation of the process used to develop the mitigation plan. This includes how the plan was developed, who was involved, and how the public was involved.
- 2) A risk assessment to identify vulnerabilities to wildfire in the wildland/urban interface (WUI).
- 3) A prioritized mitigation strategy that addresses each of the risks. Examples of these strategies could be:

- ☐ Training for fire departments
- ☐ Public education
- ☐ Hazardous fuel treatments
- ☐ Equipment
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Additional planning
- ☐ New facilities
- ☐ Infrastructure improvements
- ☐ Code and/or ordinance revision
- ☐ Volunteer efforts
- ☐ Evacuation plans, etc.

- 4) A process for maintenance of the plan that includes monitoring and evaluation of mitigation activities.
- 5) Documentation that the plan has been formally adopted by the involved agencies.

To develop wildfire mitigation plans it is suggested that each county bring together the following individuals, as appropriate for each county, to make up the County Wildland/Urban Fire Interagency Planning Group. This group should contain the following representatives.

- ☐ County Commissioners (Lead)
- ☐ Local Fire Chiefs
- ☐ Idaho Department of Lands representative
- ☐ USDA Forest Service representative
- ☐ USDI Bureau of Land Management representative
- ☐ US Fish and Wildlife representative
- ☐ Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security representative
- ☐ Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Chairperson
- ☐ Resource Conservation and Development representative
- ☐ Idaho Department of Fish and Game representative
- ☐ Interested citizens and community leaders as appropriate
- ☐ Other officials as appropriate

The planning group, with critical input from homeowners and the general public, will determine where the risks and vulnerabilities to wildland/urban fire are within the county and what mitigation actions are required. County organizations that include most of the identified representatives are already in place in Bonneville County.

In Bonneville County, existing assessments and planning documentation have fulfilled many of the requirements made above, however, the purpose of this planning activity is to integrate existing relevant information into a single place and develop a strategic pathway to fire mitigation implementation.

### **Project Requirements**

The Plan is being written to establish the jurisdiction's commitment to reduce risks from disasters and technological hazards, and to serve as a guide for decision makers as they commit resources to reduce the effects of wildfires upon private property within the designated wildland/urban interface areas.

The project has been outlined and conducted in accordance with the following requirements set forth by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

1. Develop and Document the Planning Process
2. Assess the Risk

3. Develop Mitigation Strategies
4. Develop a Maintenance Process for the Plan

### **Planning Methodology**

Information contained in the Plan is based on research and information taken from a variety of sources. The intention of the planning team is not to duplicate existing information, but rather to integrate resources provided by members of the planning committee.

The Interagency Planning Group is comprised of the following.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Dave Radford	Bonneville County Commissioner
Mike Taysom	Bonneville County Emergency Management
John R. Therriault	Bonneville County Emergency Management
Jared Loosli	Ucon Fire Chief
Kevin Eckersell	Bonneville County Road and Bridge Supervisor
Janet Cheney	Bonneville County GIS
Robert Jamison	Calamity Summer Home
Norm Showalter	Calamity Summer Home
Dean Soelberg	Sheep Creek Summer Home
B L Page	Sheep Creek Summer Home
Dave Klaehn	Swan Valley Fire District
Dick Fowler	Bonneville Fire District
Matt Morgan	Bonneville Fire District
Dean Ellis	City of Idaho Falls Fire Chief
Don Gosswiller	Bureau of Land Management
Dean Philbrick	Swan Valley Fire District
Toni Philbrick	Swan Valley Fire District
Ron Frazell	Swan Valley Fire District
Keith Birch	Idaho Department of Lands
Steven Serr	Bonneville County Planning & Zoning Director
Kevin Conran	Bureau of Land Management
Kim Ragotzkie	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Clarence Nelson	Ammon Fire Chief
Wes Jones	Emergency Response Solutions - Project Manager
Rick Fawcett	Emergency Response Solutions - Senior Consultant

### **Meetings**

Planning meetings have been held to gather information and develop natural hazard actions for this plan. Additional meetings will be held with the County Commission, homeowners, and the general public.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
April 27, 2004	Interagency Planning Group	Planning Meeting
May 10, 2004	Interagency Planning Group	Planning Meeting
June 2, 2004	Interagency Planning Group	Planning Meeting
July 4, 2004	Swan Valley Residents	Public Meeting
July 26, 2004	Interagency Planning Group	Planning Meeting
August 13, 2004	Interagency Planning Group	Planning Meeting
August 31, 2004	Swan Valley Residents	Public Meeting

## Public Participation

Public participation is being assured in four specific ways:

- ❑ Ensure ongoing involvement of private homeowners and or representatives from the communities served by this process on the planning committees.
- ❑ Provide access to the Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan and associated information on the Internet.
- ❑ Notify by mail the property owners who live outside of the county, announcing the development of a plan, the opportunity to review the plan online, inviting them to make comments on the plan, and requesting them to complete a brief questionnaire.
- ❑ Facilitate scheduled public meetings for residents living in the wildland/urban interface areas.

## Mitigation Alternatives

Mitigation alternatives and resulting implementing actions are being developed to address the vulnerabilities identified in Section 3. All mitigation alternatives will be analyzed for cost benefit where possible. The resulting benefits will be summarized and provided as part of the final alternative descriptions.

The Wildland/Urban Interface Mitigation (*implementation*) Action Plan is the most important product that will be developed by this process. The Action Plan contained in the Executive Summary is a summary of Section 5 and identifies who is responsible for implementation of the action, what resources are required for implementation, and when the implementation is to be completed.

## Plan Contents

Each section of the Plan provides important information and resources to assist in understanding the issues facing the county, its citizens, businesses, and emergency responders. The sections of the Plan work together to create a document that guides the mitigation mission to reduce risk and prevent loss from future wildfires.

The Plan is structured for ease of use and updating. Individuals interested in specific sections of the Plan will find the tabular format easy to negotiate and reference. The ability to update individual sections of the Plan places less financial burden on the county. Decision makers can allocate funding and staff resources to review and update selected sections, thereby avoiding a full update, which can be costly and time-consuming. New data can be easily incorporated, resulting in an evolving mitigation plan that remains current and relevant to Bonneville County.

The Plan is organized as follows:

1. **Executive Summary and Action Plan** - Provides an overview of the mitigation plan and a succinct listing of all implementing actions.
2. **Section 1: Introduction and Planning Process** - Describes mitigation planning requirements and the current planning methodology.
3. **Section 2: Bonneville County Idaho** - Presents a brief overview of Bonneville County.
4. **Section 3: Risk Assessment** - Provides hazard identification, vulnerability, and risk analysis associated with wildfires in Bonneville County.
5. **Section 4: Public Participation** – Provides an overview of public involvement, and documents public input into the planning process.

6. **Section 5: Economic Analysis and Mitigation Actions** - Provides implementing actions developed to address the identified hazards and vulnerabilities. Also, provides the results of the economic analysis completed as part of the alternative selection process.
7. **Section 6: Plan Maintenance** - Provides guidance on plan implementation, evaluation and maintenance.

### **Plan Adoption**

The Bonneville County Board of County Commissioners is responsible for adopting the Plan. Once the Plan has been adopted, copies of the plan will be distributed to all the agencies which participated in the planning effort. To date, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has not reviewed, approved or disapproved of any plans in the state of Idaho.

### **Coordinating Body**

The Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interagency Planning Group is responsible for coordinating development and implementation of the Five Year Action Plan. This group will undertake the formal review process. The County Commissioners will assign appropriate members of the Wildland/Urban Interagency Planning Group, private property owners, and representatives of resource providing agencies to form the Wildland/Urban Mitigation Advisory Committee. This committee will implement, evaluate and conduct an annual review of the plan. They will meet, at least quarterly, to examine opportunities for implementation of specific mitigation actions and evaluate the implementation process.

Subcommittees may be formed under the direction of the Advisory Committee to further evaluate actions as established and categorized in Section 5. Recommendations will then be made as to specific implementation processes including acquisition of funding and other necessary resources.

### **Implementation through Existing Programs**

The Plan will provide a series of recommendations, which Bonneville County will have the opportunity to implement through existing programs and procedures.

Upon adoption of the initial Plan, the county will continue developing their natural hazard mitigation goals and actions using this document as a baseline of information for the risks associated with wildfires within the county. Within six months of formal adoption of the Plan, the newly formed and appointed Wildland/Urban Mitigation Advisory Committee will review the recommendations listed. This committee will continue to evaluate the feasibility of each strategy, determine the current status, readjust the priorities as necessary, and monitor the progress for implementation.